

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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P 171453Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8293

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 7568

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, EAID, LI, US

SUBJ: TOLBERT INAUGURATION: USDEL STATEMENT

REF: A) STATE 294667 B) MONROVIA 7567

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY AGREES THAT PRESENCE IN LIBERIA OF USDEL TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S INAUGURATION PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO ADD IMPETUS TO NEW MOVEMENT IN US-LIBERIAN RELATIONS BEGUN AT SEPTEMBER MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT NEW IMPETUS COULD PROPERLY TAKE FORM OF STATEMENT OF US INTENTIONS FOR FURTHER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA S FOLLOW-ON TO AID ADMINISTRATOR'S NOVEMBER VISIT. PROPOSED ELEMENTS OF STATEMENT (STATE 294667) ARE PERCEPTIVE AND INCLUSIVE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL NUANCES AND SHIFTS OF EMPHASES WILL STRENGTHEN STATEMENT AND AVOID SETTING POSSIBLE "NUMBERS GAME" TRAP FOR FUTURE US-LIBERIAN ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP. EMBASSY STRONGLY URGES THAT THIS OCCASION ALSO BE USED TO DELIVER TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT PERSONAL INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT FORD TO MAKE STATE VISIT TO US AT SOME UNSPECIFIED DATE, SAY, "IN FIRST HALF 1977." END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY AGREES THAT PRESENCE IN LIBERIA OF USDEL TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S INAUGURATION PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO ADD IMPETUS TO NEW MOVEMENT IN US-LIBERIAN RELATIONS BEGUN AT
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SEPTEMBER MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS.

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT SUCH NEW IMPETUS COULD TAKE FORM OF STATEMENT OF US INTENTIONS FOR FURTHER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA AS FOLLOW-ON TO AID ADMINISTRATOR PARKER'S NOVEMBER VISIT. AS SUGGESTED IN PARA. 5, BELOW, WE BELIEVE THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY.

3. STATE 294667 DOES NOT SPECIFY WHAT IS MEANT BY "MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT." WE TAKE THIS TO MEAN A STATEMENT IN PRIVATE TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT, NOT A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IN INAUGURATION PERIOD. LIBERIANS ARE TREATING INAUGURATION AS ONSET OF NEW DEPARTURES IN PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S POLICIES; WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO UPSTAGE HIM BY WELL-PUBLICIZED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MIGHT DETRACT FROM HIS GREAT MOMENT. PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAS ALREADY SINGLED OUT US FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN INAUGURAL PROCEEDINGS; IT BEHOOVES US TO UNDERSTAND HIS FREQUENT PREDICAMENT AT BEING SEEN AS BEING TIED TOO CLOSE TO US. SETTING, AS PORTRAYED TO US SO FAR, WILL BE CEREMONIAL AND FESTIVE, RATHER THAN BUSINESS ORIENTED. GOL WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY WISH TO AVOID POSSIBILITY THAT OTHER DELEGATIONS MIGHT BE EMBARRASSED AT COMING EMPTY-HANDED IN COMPARISON TO OURS. COMMUNICATION OF STATEMENT TO PRESIDENT IN PRIVATE WOULD MAKE IMPRESSION WHERE IT COUNTS, AND OF COURSE COULD BE WELL PUBLICIZED SHORTLY AFTERWARD IN EARLY DAYS OF NEW ADMINISTRATION.

4. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF STATEMENT SET FORTH STATE 294667:

(A) HEALTH SECTOR. (1) GOL IS OF COURSE FULLY AWARE THAT POSITIVE FEASIBILITY STUDY INCLUDING ORIGINAL PRP/PP FOR HEALTH MGT PROJECT PREPARED IN AUGUST WAS UNRELATED TO PARKER VISIT IN OCTOBER. GOL NOT CAPABLE OF FULLY APPRECIATING DIFFICULT POLICY DECISION INVOLVED IN MAKING CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION IN ORDER TO BALANCE IMPLEMENTATION FROM FY 77 TO FY 76. GOL TENDS TO THINK IN TERMS OF CSS, I.E. 1976, WHICH REMAINS UNCHANGED. (2) NEW MAJOR ELEMENT AND HALLMARK COMMITMENT IS USG WILLINGNESS TO FINANCE DOLS 5 MILLION HEALTH PROGRAM AS EXTENSION/SEQUEL TO LOFA COUNTY HEALTH PROJECT WITH VITAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE TO BE EXTENDED TO GOL BY HEALTH MGT TEAM. AID/W IS IN BEST POSITION TO PROJECT ETA THIS TEAM, TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE VOLUMINOUS DOCUMENTATION AND LIKELIHOOD OF CONFIDENTIAL

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OBLIGATION/AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDS IN CY 1976.

(B) EDUCATION. GOL HAS COLLABORATED IN PLANS AND WORK SCOPE FOR VISIT OF FULL HIID TEAM IN JANUARY. SUGGEST HEAD DEL INDICATE USG READINESS TO FINANCE SIGNIFICANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER SUPPORT WITHIN PRIORITY TARGET AREAS THAT WILL BE JOINTLY IDENTIFIED AS RESULT HIID/GOL ASSESSMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS.

(C) AGRICULTURE SECTOR. MENTION OF INCREASED US COLLABORATION WITH GOL IN THIS AREA IN CY 76 AND FUTURE YEARS COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE STATEMENT.

(C) RURAL ROADS. MONROVIA-KONIA AND BUCHANAN-RIVER CESS ROAD (RURAL ROAD III PROJECT) HAVE BEEN IN WORKS SINCE 1973. US SIDE STILL DISSATISFIED WITH FEASIBILITY STUDIES. LATEST REDSO/USAID SCENARIO (WORKED OUT DURING REDSO DIRECTOR WEDEMAN'S VISIT EARLIER THIS MONTH) WOULD ELIMINATE SOUTHERN PORTION OF MONROVIA-KONIA ROAD AND LIMIT BUCHANAN ROAD TO THREE BRIDGES. FOR GOL HAS INDEPENDENTLY GONE AHEAD WITH ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND COMPLETED SIGNIFICANT PORTION. WE RECOMMEND STRONGLY THAT STATEMENT BE LIMITED TO ASSURANCE OF USG READINESS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO RURAL ROAD SECTOR, SUBJECT TO ENGINEERING AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA. GOL CLEARLY CONSIDERS DOLS 8 MILLION FOR RURAL ROADS III AS LONGSTANDING, LONG OVERDUE US COMMITMENT.

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8294

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONROVIA 7568

(E) AID LEVEL. WE URGE ON HEAD DEL SUBSTITUTION OF TERM SUCH AS QTE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ASSISTANCE UNQTE FOR QTE MORE THAN DOUBLING UNQTE OF AVERAGE OF LAST YEARS' VOLUME UNLESS HEAD DEL CAN GIVE SPECIFIC FIGURES. (DO WE SPEAK OF CY OR FY AVERAGES, OF COMMITMENT OR DISBURSEMENTS, ETC.?) STATEMENT SUCH AS QTE DOUBLING UNQTE COULD BECOME KEY ELEMENT IN GOL APPROACH TO OUR FUTURE ASSISTANCE RELATIONS. MOREOVER, GOL MAY CONTEND LATER ON THAT ANY DOLLARS BILLION PLUS AID

APPROPRIATION FIGURE CAN ALWAYS ACCOMMODATE AN EXTRA DOLS 10 MILLION FOR LIBERIA REGARDLESS OF CONGRESSIONAL REDUCTIONS OF ADMINISTRATION'S REQUESTS.

(F) STATEMENT. WE WOULD THEREFORE SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO NUANCED STATEMENT THAT WOULD EMPHASIZE MAJOR EXPANSION OF US ASSISTANCE TO HEALTH SECTOR AS IMMEDIATE RESULT OF PARKER VISIT AND AS SYMBOL OF STEPPED-UP ECON AID RELATIONSHIP WHICH WAS USHERED IN BY UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED IN COURSE FONMIN DENNIS MEETING WITH SEC KISSINGER IN SEPTEMBER. STAEMENT COULD THEN REVIEW PROMPT ACTION IN EDUCATION SECTOR (HIID EXPLORATORY VISIT IN NOVEMBER) AND CONTINUING JOINT EFFORTS IN JANUARY. THESE WE EXPECT WILL LEAD TO JOINT IDENTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES AND RESTRAINTS INCLUDING ACTIONABLE PROJECTS THAT CAN BE ASSISTED BY USG. STATEMENT WOULD ALSO INCLUDE ASSURANCE THAT WE WILL CONTINUE AND EXPAND EFFORTS IN AREAS OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT (BONG COUNTY) AND RURAL ROAD CONSTRUCTION. MORE-CONFIDENTIAL

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OVER WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO PUBLICATION NEW FOUR YEAR PLAN IN EXPECTATION THAT WE WILL JOINTLY IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL AREAS IN WHICH USG CAN BE HELPFUL. THUS WE ANTICIPATE THAT TOTAL VOLUME OF US ECON ASSISTANCE WILL SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE OVER THE AVERAGE OF THE LAST FEW YEARS UNDERLINING OUR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP.

5. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT CONCEPT OF STATE 294667 IS COMPLETELY VALID IN THAT IT SEEKS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRESENCE IN LIBERIA OF USDEL TO TOLBERT'S INAUGURATION TO ADD IMPETUS TO NEW MOVEMENT IN US-LIBERIAN RELATIONS BEGUN AT SEPTEMBER MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS. THIS NEW IMPETUS NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE IN FIELD OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. WHAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT REALLY WANTS, WHAT WOULD MEET WITH UNQUALIFIED AND ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL, AND WHAT WOULD REALLY ADD IMPETUS TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD BE AN INVITATION TO PRESIDENT TOLBERT TO MAKE A STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. EMBASSY IS OF COURSE AWARE OF PRESIDENT FORD'S CROWDED SCHEDULE AND OF COMING ELECTION CAMPAIGN. SO ARE LIBERIANS. BUT THEY ALSO KNOW SCHEDULING STATE VISITS WILL HAVE TO BE RESUMED AT SOME TIME IN FUTURE. IN EMBASSY VIEW, LIBERIANS WOULD BE MORE THAN SATISFIED WITH A PERSONAL INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT FORD, IN PRINCIPLE, FOR A STATE VISIT IN, SAY, "FIRST HALF OF 1977." SUCH AN INVITATION WOULD SURELY PROVIDE AN ENORMOUS IMPETUS TO THE CURRENT THRUST OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. IT WOULD CERTAINLY OBTVIATE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT GOL MIGHT SEE ANY SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT AS OUTLINED STATE 294667 AS LESS SIGNIFICANT THAN WE DO.
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